

# GRIZZLY

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# Grizzly

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California National Guard

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## FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to introduce myself to the Grizzly's readers. My name is 2nd Lt. Will Martin, a newly commissioned officer with the 49th Military Police Brigade and public affairs specialist at the Joint Force Headquarters. For the next several months, I will be serving as the editor of the Grizzly while Maj. Mirtha Villarreal is on leave.

You, the reader, are also the eyes and ears of the Grizzly, storytellers of our Guardsmen's sacrifice and service. I ask you continue making every effort to send articles and photographs, and be sure to include those details essential to good journalism – the who, what, when, where and why. The timeliness of your contributions is also critical, as our planning and editing require that we receive your contributions before the 15th of each month.

As a prominent voice of the California National Guard, the Grizzly is a publication of which I am privileged to be editor. Please don't hesitate to contact me at [william.lee.martin@us.army.mil](mailto:william.lee.martin@us.army.mil) or 916-854-3136 with questions or input.

## SUBMISSIONS

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- ★ 250 – 300 words for half a page, 600-800 words for full page article.
- ★ Include first and last names, and *verify spelling*
- ★ If there is a Public Affairs officer assigned to your unit ensure he/she reviews it.

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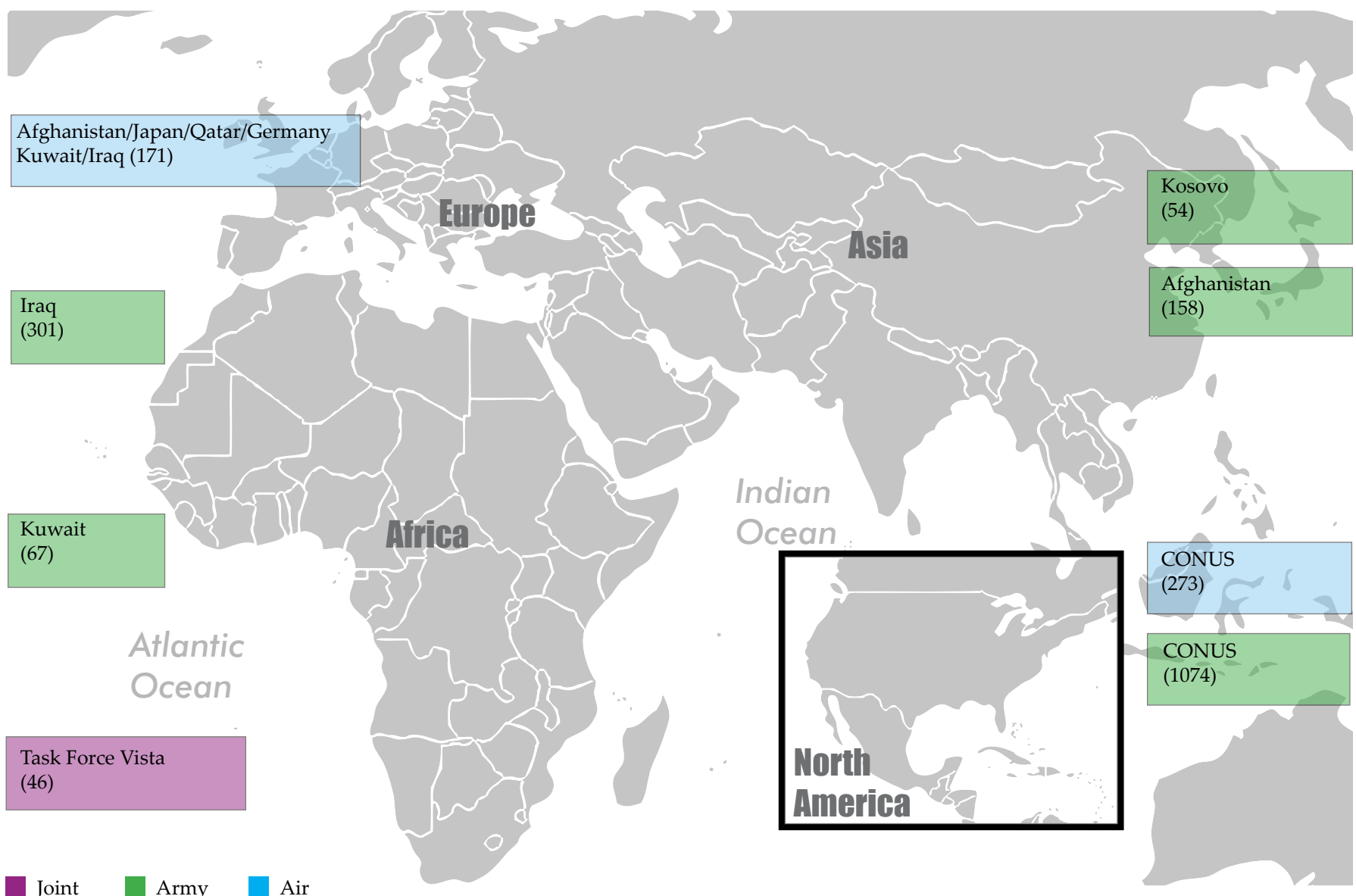
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COVER PHOTO MASTER SGT. RICHARD E. PACK

## Where We Are

# THE CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD AS OF AUGUST 2008





# OPERATION LIGHTNING STRIKE GUARD'S 40TH CAB ANSWERS THE CALL

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. AL BOSCO

When it comes to supporting national defense, the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade serves a vital role, but it served an equally important role in California's fire suppression efforts during Operation Lightning Strike – the name given to the effort to suppress the more than 2,000 fires that were caused as a result of lightning on June 21 that charred more than one million acres of California landscape.

The brigade is comprised of multiple units spread throughout California including the 640th Aviation Support Battalion, 1-140th Air Assault Battalion and 3-140th Security and Support Battalion. A combat-ready National Guard unit, the 40th CAB supports the Department of Defense military mechanism, but its bread and butter mission is to protect California's citizens by providing mission support to civil authorities. Known as **MSCA**, the unit responds to support requests by the governor during disasters and emergencies.

According to Col. Mitch Medigovich, the brigade's commander and state aviation officer, the unit has supported myriad requests for assistance in California and across the nation. In fact, during the outbreak of fires in Southern California in 2007, known as Fall Blaze, the unit took on a supporting role and conducted fire suppression operations with eight of its UH-60 Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

When the state once again found itself in need of the Guard's support in June 2008, the unit responded, but this time it had a leading role heading up Joint Task Force Sentinel. Serving as

the leading edge of the California Army Guard's aviation assets, the unit was charged with maintaining oversight of Guard aviation assets from California, as well as out-of-state support from Guard units nationwide through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). In addition, the unit coordinated activities with the governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to ensure personnel and equipment were available to support the OES/CAL FIRE mission upon request.

Although the 40th CAB is used to supporting the California fire mission, the main difference between its unit's role during Fall Blaze and Operation Lightning Strike was the scope of the operations, Medigovich said.

"Fall Blaze required aviation involvement on a much smaller scale than was required this time," he said. "We were able to sustain our operations in Southern California with eight aircraft compared with the 26 that were needed this time."

Medigovich added that what isn't often realized is the number of aircraft required for total support. He said in order to maintain operations with eight aircraft in 2007, 14 were necessary due to maintenance and other issues, and this time, having 26 aircraft on mission required having up to 35 ready at all times.

During Operation Lightning Strike, providing support to civil authorities required the unit to take on ancillary responsibilities which included providing maintenance for all Guard rotary-wing

aircraft supporting the fires, as well as deploying personnel who served as liaisons relaying information between the civil agencies, the Guard and assets in the field – something Lt. Col. Raymond Watts, 40th CAB executive officer, said was key to the unit's success.

"Having solid cross-level communication between the Guard, OES and CAL FIRE was critical to our success," Watts said. "That allowed us to be readily available to provide the right kind of support when and where it was needed, which resulted in our assets having a significant impact within the first few days."

Additionally, Watts pointed out that credit is also owed to the employers of a majority of the Guardsmen who supported the operation.

"The civilian employers really played a huge role in our successes, primarily by supporting the Guardsmen they employ and understanding what they were being called to do for CAL FIRE and the state of California," Watts said. "It really made a difference in unit morale, not having to worry about job-related issues stemming from supporting the mission."

However, the operation was not without its challenges. In fact, aside from having to pool its resources to support the fire mission, the unit was still required to maintain its war-readiness demands, with some units preparing to deploy in support of our Nation's Global War on Terrorism, as well as its routine state mission which includes conducting medevac, search and rescue and counter-drug operations.

In addition, the unit was tasked to provide 200 personnel to serve as hand crews assisting CAL FIRE with cutting fire lines, a mission that hasn't been done in 30 years, while also maintaining its aviation mission requirement.

"It's a constant balance to meet full-spectrum operations, and we have to constantly identify what else is going on to determine the best way to support the various mission requirements," Medigovich said.

But not only did the unit meet the challenge, it quickly became the focal point of rotary-wing aviation support during the latest round of fires and proved it could be very successful across the board.

Asked how the unit was able to achieve the level of success it enjoyed, Medigovich identified the critical areas that enabled the unit to maximize efficiency in supporting both its state, wartime and emergency missions.

"One thing that made a huge difference is our geographic location and the type of terrain we were dealing with during Operation Lightning Strike. We were able to conduct operations from an existing aviation flight facility at Mather, which allowed us to stand up a battalion-level task force to meet the mission requirements," Medigovich said. "We conducted everything from flight planning and operations to maintenance support from there. Also, due to our location (and having CAL FIRE personnel on-site) we could get aircraft to the fires and on mission quickly."

Medigovich added that whenever



National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters fill the flight-line at the Mather flight facility near Sacramento, Calif. Mather served as the main operating facility for Joint Task Force Sentinel under the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, which provided maintenance and operations support for aircraft from as many as 15 states. The aircraft deployed to forward operating locations in support of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection efforts to battle blazes that torched more than 1 million acres of land.



aircraft were forward deployed to airports or helibases near the fires, a team of maintainers, known as a contact team, was also dispatched along with a liaison officer and a team of fuel specialists to provide on-site aviation support.

The number of fires was also a major difference between Operation Lightning Strike and other operations the unit has supported.

"CAL FIRE is among the best at what it does, so if they need our help it's usually not for very long and they typically don't need a lot of aviation support. This time, however, they became overwhelmed due to the sheer number of fires burning at one time, and not only did they need us, they needed us on a much larger scale than we're used to," Medigovich said. "To meet their needs we integrated with Air National Guard rotary-wing assets for the first time, as well as asked for assistance from our sister Guard units from other states - and they all came running to help."

We have a robust fleet of aviation assets and we're usually the ones to send aircraft to support other states' missions when they need help, but we became saturated quickly and for the first time we had to ask for EMAC support in order to meet the requirements to support the fires. The amazing thing is, everyone was willing to assist. Some units were even called over the July 4th holiday and they immediately dropped what they were doing to help out. This is a true testament to the relationship and cooperative effort of the National Guard, but also of Americans during a time of crisis."

Yet another success was the unit's deployment of OH-58 Kiowa aircraft to serve specialized roles as helicopter coordinators above the fires, as well as providing mapping and thermal imaging of the fires.

"A majority of the missions we flew in the OH-58 were fire mapping missions, but occasionally we were sent up to coordinate the firefight from the air as helicopter coordinators," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeff Crandall, an OH-58 pilot.

He further explained fire mapping missions involve flying along the edge of the fires while a computer maps the boundaries allowing CAL FIRE personnel on the ground to get a better picture of what they're dealing with. Also, the OH-58s provided thermal images of the fires that allowed CAL FIRE to see where hot spots were located and appropriately direct resources where needed.



A group of firefighters board a National Guard CH-47 Chinook en route to the Butte Lightning Complex fires burning near Chico, Calif. Aircraft like the Chinook and UH-60 Black Hawk, which were assigned to Joint Task Force Sentinel under the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, transported more than 1,000 personnel during operations supporting the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's efforts to suppress the fires, which have scorched more than 1 million acres of Northern California landscapes.



◀ Army Staff Sgt. Marty Ortiz, a helicopter crew chief assigned to Joint Task Force Sentinel, carries a box of helicopter parts to an awaiting helicopter at the National Guard facility in Stockton, Calif. The parts were flown to the task force's operating location at Mather Flight Facility near Sacramento, Calif., to speed maintenance of aircraft supporting the firefighting effort. While supporting the fire effort, maintainers kept as many as 35 aircraft ready to fly in support of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection efforts. ▼



"Normally, small aircraft like the OH-58, which normally conduct security and surveillance in support of counter-drug operations, aren't on the fires because CAL FIRE usually has enough civilian assets to fill this role," Medigovich said. "We embrace our MSCA role and we do it really well, and even though this is a mission we've never done before, the 3-140th SSB is very capable and aircrews participated in the annual fire training we conduct with CAL FIRE to ensure we could meet their needs."

During the course of the operation, the unit had more to contend with than just the fires, though. In fact, the unit frequently transported firefighting personnel to the front lines due to the difficult terrain where many fires were burning, and in several instances assisted with several search and rescue operations.

On one occasion, a Blackhawk crew conducting water drop operations in the Chico area rescued a firefighter who was suf-

fering from heat exhaustion and was in danger of being overrun by the fires.

"It was fortunate we were in the area and had the capability to assist," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joel Stevens, a California National Guard Blackhawk pilot. "We happened to be flying a Nevada National Guard aircraft, which had a hoist on-board, and since Nevada also flies with a medic, everything worked out and we were able to get the firefighter out of danger quickly."

On another occasion, a Blackhawk crew was called upon to help extract a 15-year-old Boy Scout in the Kings Canyon area near Fresno, Calif., whose leg had become pinned beneath a boulder. Interestingly, the crew conducted the mission under nighttime conditions with the assistance of night vision goggles, something Chief Warrant Officer 3 Randy Weatherhead said he's never done before.

"We were scheduled to conduct a nighttime night vision goggle currency flight when we got a call from the Fresno County Sheriff's Office needing our assistance to get the Boy Scout free," said Weatherhead. "This is the first time I've been on a search and rescue mission that required the use of night vision equipment."

And since June 22, nearly 600 Soldiers and Airmen from the California National Guard and Guard units from 14 states including neighboring states like Arizona and Nevada, and states as far away as Alabama, Louisiana, Oklahoma and New York, supported the massive fire suppression effort, along with tackling other missions along the way. In total, aircraft assigned under the unit's JTF flew nearly 900 missions, amassing more than 1,500 flying hours and conducted more than 6,000 water drops putting more than 4.2 million gallons of water on the fires. Additionally, aircrews transported more than 1,000 personnel and hauled more than 29,000 pounds of cargo. Finally, after a month and a half, the Guard's fire mission is coming to an end - for now. Soldiers and Airmen are winding down and many have already demobilized. But they are ready to spring into action should the call come again.

"The people assigned to the task force made this mission possible," Medigovich said. "It's been a long 39 days of operations, but the men and women performed their duties well and exceeded all expectations supporting the full spectrum of operations for the overall mission. I appreciate their efforts and owe each of them a debt of gratitude for their service and a job well done."



# GUARD, CIVILIANS TEAM UP TO PROVIDE FIRELINE EMERGENCY CARE

STORY AND PHOTO BY PFC. JOSEPH WOOLLS

Major Rose Abendroth sutured the last of 21 stitches into the chainsaw wound of Los Angeles County firefighter Kevin Taylor, who cut his leg while fighting the blazes in Mendocino County. Minutes later Taylor was up on his feet, smiling.

"I'm lucky," said Taylor. "Maj. Abendroth is an expert in suturing."

Firefighting is a dangerous job, but the firefighters and Guardsmen in Mendocino County know they are in good hands, thanks to the joint efforts of the Disaster Medical Assistance Team and the California National Guard. DMAT, a group of volunteer medical personnel under contract with Cal fire, works closely with the Guard to provide free-of-charge medical care to those on the fireline.

Due to the volunteer nature of DMAT personnel, a doctor or physician's assistant is not always on hand. To ensure the safety of those on the fireline, the Guard has volunteered personnel like Abendroth, a Physician's Assistant, as well as several medics to the effort. The Guard has also shared its ambulance resources, which DMAT staff said has been a critical contribution.

"The ambulance service provides us with the capability to



Major Rose Abendroth, right 297th Support Battalion, San Mateo, Calif., and volunteer physician's assistant for the Disaster Medical Assistance Team, Boonville, Calif., sutures the leg of Kevin Taylor, a firefighter with the Los Angeles County Fire Department. Taylor injured himself while clearing brush with a chainsaw. Christian Turner, a paramedic and DMAT volunteer, provides assistance.

project forward into the fireline and remove casualties, a capability we do not normally have," said DMAT team leader, Richard Brown. "The National Guard has become integral to us."

Though the DMAT has emergency capabilities, it most commonly treats patients for fireline related illnesses and injuries, such as poison oak and minor sprains. To reduce these cases, DMAT also coordinates with the Guard to raise prevention awareness.

"We like to stress the preventable side of the injuries," said Brown.

Private First Class Barry Young, a

crewmember of Task Force AXE 3, who visited the DMAT for a cold, expressed a Soldier's view of the DMAT.

"The staff is top notch," Young said. "They treat you quickly, and are very caring and professional – especially Maj. A."

Abendroth, a Guardsman with the 297th Support Battalion, San Mateo, Calif., said she didn't think twice when asked to serve with DMAT.

"I've worked with DMAT in the past... and this operation is phenomenal," said the officer of nine years. "We've fell in very

easily and I feel like I've made some friends here, which is nice when you're working around the clock."

Brown, as well, noted the organization's past relationships together.

"Our unit has a long history of working with the National Guard throughout the United States," Brown said. "We worked very closely with the Guard during Katrina and the wildfires in San Diego during October 2007. We have a great partnership and look forward to working with the National Guard in the future."

Though set up to care for those working to extinguish the flames, DMAT doesn't turn anybody away. The volunteer corps has provided treatment to off-the-street civilians in the community, contractors, and media, Brown said: "We have people that come here with medical problems – we treat those medical problems."

Working with DMAT during the wildfires has provided her a feeling of pride, said Abendroth. "It's a great service for our Soldiers, and we're helping the community too," she said. "The community has been very appreciative. When we drive by in Humvees, everyone smiles and waves."

## GUARD DEPLOYING CHAPLAINS TO GROUND FIREFIGHTING TASK FORCES

BY CAPT. AL BOSCO

The California National Guard is deploying chaplains to serve as a support network among the ground task forces deployed to support the state's fire suppression efforts.

The effort is a proactive step to offer religious services and comfort to Soldiers and airmen mobi-

lized with ground teams to fires throughout the state.

Members of the chaplaincy will deploy for two weeks at a time to various fire complexes throughout the state, according to 1st Lt. Marc Unger, a staff chaplain with the California State Military Reserve

"We'll deploy to the field to talk to people and help them to deal with any issues they may have being separated from their families and working in a tough environment," said Unger. "These deployments will serve as morale calls and will allow us to provide both spiritual and emotional support."

Unger, whose son Spc. Daniel Unger was killed in Iraq on May 25, 2004, has been a chaplain for four years and also serves as chaplain for his son's unit, the 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment. He said it's important to make sure people have someone to talk to.

Echoing the Chaplain's sentiment, Spec. Okon Harris, a security officer at the State Military Reserve Headquarters who is in training to be a chaplain's assistant, said of the troops fighting the fires, "Being away from family while fighting

the fires is stressful, so it's nice to have someone to talk to. It's important for the Soldiers in the field."

Harris, who has been training to be a chaplain's assistant for a month, said he's wanted to be a chaplain's assistant since attending basic training

Aside from providing an outlet, the chaplains may try to hold services in the field or at headquarters when possible.

Unger added his favorite part of the job is being able to spend time with those who serve our nation whether in combat against enemies or in domestic situations such as the fires.

"We're all Americans, and we're in this together, so we help one another however we can," said Unger. "This is what the Guard is all about."

PHOTO BY SGT. KEN BINCE







Members of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Company participate in urban terrain military training at an abandoned sawmill in Auberry, Calif.

# URBAN TRAINING

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS DAVID P. COSS

On Aug. 1st, 2008, select members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, conducted urban terrain military training at an abandoned sawmill site in Auberry, Calif.

Eighteen Soldiers traveled to the site to train on individual weapons skills, entry and clearing procedures against enemy combatants, interacting with civilians on the battlefield and embedding reporters in U.S. fire teams.

The training site consisted of a five-story wood platform measuring about 15,000 square feet and a three-story, 10,000 square-foot main operations building.

Personnel were provided a training scenario, and once given the OK to train by range safeties and medics, they donned necessary protective gear and entered the main operations building to begin clearing enemy personnel. Using M16A2 and M4 rifles, they cautiously entered the main building and were met with a fusillade of AK47 fire.

The initial reaction on the part of the Soldiers was that of the proverbial deer in the headlights: everyone froze and was killed. As the day and training cycles wore on, however, Soldiers progressed in scenarios from entry teams against stationary targets to multiple moving targets to structure clearing, and, finally, last Soldier standing exercises. By the end of the day the Soldiers were moving successfully from the main building to the superstructure of the boiler, which consisted of miles of pipes, catwalks and hiding areas that required clearing.

With temperatures hovering near 102 degrees, the training day placed the same demands on the troops' mental and physical capabilities as one might encounter in Iraq or Kuwait. Normally, these Soldiers are assigned to staff sections in the bri-



Members of the 40th CAB HHC take a break from their urban terrain military training in Auberry, Calif. The training provided real-world conditions with temperatures exceeding 100 degrees.

gade headquarters or the HHC. They are not your normal kick-in-the-door-and-get-the-bad-guy Joes, but as the day's events demonstrated, every Soldier may - and can - be called upon to perform such missions.

The training also provided the younger Soldiers in the unit a chance to participate in some great training, form Esprit de Corps and prepare for possible deployment. In addition, the weapons systems, body armor, and heat added a high degree of realism to the training, and as NCOIC for training Sgt. Jaime Garza noted, "We train as we fight."

PHOTOS BY MASTER SGT. RICHARD E. PACK



Specialist Shaun Ochsner, communications specialist, makes adjustments to a satellite atop an Incident Commander's Command, Control and Communications Unit (IC4U) in Booneville, Calif. The California National Guard mobilized five IC4Us to run operations in support of Operation Lightning Strike.



# CAL GUARD'S IC4U DISPERSES COMMUNICATIONS MAGIC

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. EDDIE SIGUENZA

Like a credit card or personal digital assistant, there are some things the California National Guard doesn't leave home without.

In its huge wallet, the Guard often carries its emergency brainchild: an Incident Commander's Command, Control and Communications Unit (IC4U) or simply, a communication do-it-all device on wheels. These days, for every emergency call-up, the Guard is likely to bring along this technological piece of equipment.

Five IC4Us were employed recently for Operation Lightning Strike. Each provide communication capability where and when there was none. They are satellite-based machines that provide different types of contact quickly.

"This is really self-sustaining. In 15 minutes or less, we can give the incident commander communication with anyone," said

Staff Sgt. John Rapp, IC4U non-commissioned officer in charge at Booneville, Calif., site of Task Force Axe's operation center. "We'll set up commo for the (Tactical Operations Center) and they'll have commo for whatever they need even if there's no infrastructure."

The IC4Us have quickly become an integral part of the Guard's mission. They broke ground in 2005 during Hurricane Katrina. The system was so impressive, Texas authorities requested them to support Hurricane Rita shortly after Katrina.

Through satellite connectivity, there's clear communication between Soldiers in the field and those at base camp. Even communication with the California National Guard's Sacramento headquarters is clear and precise.

"We go beyond that, too," said Sgt. Tobin Broaddus, communi-

cations specialist with Task Force Axe. "The way this is set up, we can have radio contact with civilian fire and police on their frequencies. We can give weather updates to the commander as well."

Rapp, Broaddus and Spc. Shaun Ochsner are in charge of IC4U-Echo. They set Task Force Axe's TOC with internet capability so data can be transmitted regularly. Nearby, Soldiers occupy a 10 square-foot tent and watch "Dish Network" television on a wide-screen TV. Others share laptops to check electronic mail and the latest news.

"We provide all this with the IC4U," Rapp added. "These keep the Soldier informed with his family and friends, keeps him occupied when not on missions and help with morale."

All IC4Us are mounted onto a tactical vehicle or civilian pickup.

Basically, they're a 6-foot metal cube metal box with electronic devices, including audio, video or DVD players, mounted inside. There's also a telephone and fax machine just behind the microwave and air conditioner.

"There are all these different types of radio systems we can cross band to keep constant contact with emergency units," Broaddus explained.

The small outer structure enables the IC4U to be mobilized quickly. It can be unbolted from a vehicle and lifted onto a cargo plane for easy transportation. It can be airlifted by helicopter and dropped in a remote area, yet still operate within minutes.

"It is designed to be that, to be able to get transported easily and run self-sufficiently anywhere," said Rapp. "As long as we have a clear satellite shot, the IC4U can be placed anywhere."



# MAINTENANCE: THE 'HEARTBEAT' OF JTF SENTINEL'S FLYING MISSION

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. AL BOSCO

For nearly a month aircraft from the California National Guard and 14 other states have continuously battled the fires raging in different parts of the state with great success – a testament to the dedication and joint effort by the Guard, as well as partner agencies. But there's one word that made the effort possible – maintenance.

Tasked with ensuring mission-capable aircraft are available for the duration of the firefight, maintainers from Task Force Mather, the 1106th Aviation Classification and Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD) and other locations state-wide work hand in hand providing a critical asset that is truly the linchpin in the effort to knock down flames.

According to Sgt. Maj. Hal London, aircraft maintenance supervisor for the Sacramento Army Aviation Support Facility at Mather Field, as many as 35 Guardsmen from the 640th Aviation Support Battalion and the 1-140th Aviation Regiment from Los Alamitos, Calif., 1-168th Aviation Regiment at Mather and the 1106th AVCRAD, located in Fresno, Calif., as well as full-time personnel assigned to the AASF at Mather, have operated nearly 20 hours each day providing aircraft maintenance support for the fire-fighting effort.

"We do everything from conducting aircraft maintenance inspections and unscheduled repairs to fixing Bambi buckets and repairing California Department of Forestry-specific equipment," London said. "At some time, every maintainer here has put hands on every [Guard helicopter] that's fought the fires."

One of the most challenging aspects of keeping aircraft mission capable is identifying maintenance needs and ensuring the aircraft receive the proper level of maintenance

support. To do this, the maintainers utilize a tracking system that determines when an aircraft is scheduled to receive maintenance, as well as utilizing contact teams in the field and even reaching back to the AVCRAD for additional support.

"We know which aircraft will need scheduled maintenance by looking at our tracking system, and we have contact teams in the field that perform preventative maintenance, inspections and minor maintenance while the aircrew rests after a mission," London said. "If there are additional repairs or in-depth maintenance inspections needed, the aircraft will be flown here, or in the event repairs exceed our abilities it will be flown to the AVCRAD."

But London added tracking can become difficult when aircraft from out of state Guard units are introduced into the mix.

"Our biggest challenge, so far, has been trying to predict what's going to be needed for the out-of-state aircraft since they aren't programmed into our tracking system," he said. "We've had to revert to a manual system to track those, though, so it really hasn't been a problem."

London credits several factors to the unit's ability to keep the aircraft on mission, such as having personnel deployed to Mather from the AVCRAD, as well as other Guard units' ensuring their aircraft are properly maintained.

"The AVCRAD has taken a lot of weight off us, not only by having personnel deployed here, but also by providing parts and allowing us to send aircraft to them for specialized maintenance issues," he said. "A major role in having AVCRAD personnel here is having specialized experience available that allows us to do things we might not otherwise be able to do."



Specialist Matthew Dawson, a UH-60 Black Hawk mechanic, installs the tailrotor cover on a Black Hawk. Spc. Dawson is deployed to Mather Field from the 1106th Aviation Classification and Repair Activity Depot in Fresno, Calif.

In fact, London said at one point a UH-60 Black Hawk arrived with an auxiliary power unit problem that baffled the maintenance team, so the aircraft was flown to the AVCRAD where maintainers had the specialized tools and equipment to troubleshoot and fix the problem.

According to Lt. Col. Paul Bryant, the AVCRAD deputy commander, it's been a team effort.

"We primarily act more as backup due to the fact that we have our additional full-time requirement supporting 13 western states' Guard units, as well as balancing our war support mission with state support," Bryant said. "But for the fire support mission we've been able to supply things to the field quickly and provide on-site experience to determine what may be better suited for AVCRAD support. Having AVCRAD folks deployed to Mather gives them better exposure to other maintainers and builds their skills while also building relationships."

Echoing the colonel's comments, Chief Warrant Officer Remi Desiga, the AVCRAD's production control

manager, who also serves as a liaison between the AVCRAD and JTF Sentinel, said the effort has also generated satisfaction among those involved.

"The fires have kept us busy, providing personnel and maintenance support to the effort, but our folks will do whatever they have to in order to get the job done," Desiga said. "In fact, when this kicked off, an aircraft came in requiring phase maintenance – something that normally takes 25 days to complete. The AVCRAD jumped on the mission request and was able to get the aircraft out the door and fighting fires in 16 days."

"I can't say enough good things about the AVCRAD and our maintainers here and in the field, as well as the units out-of-state," said London. "Everything from having AVCRAD support here and reach-back at the facility, to good preventative maintenance by our contact teams in the field and out-of-state units ensuring their aircraft are well taken care of has definitely made things easier for us. That has allowed us to keep the aircraft on-line and safely fighting fires."

Specialist Francisco Martinez, left, and Sgt. Darrell Newman, UH-60 Black Hawk mechanics assigned to the California National Guard's Aviation Classification and Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD), in Fresno, Calif., install a chip detector in one of the Black Hawk's engines, which will alert aircrew to the presence of metal in the engine's gearbox.



Private Bret Williams, a UH-60 Black Hawk mechanic assigned to Task Force Mather, part of Joint Task Force Sentinel, inspects a Black Hawk rotor.





# CALIFORNIA GUARD TRAINS FOR KOSOVO DEPLOYMENT

BY MAJ. ALANA SCHWERMER

More than 1,300 California Army National Guard Soldiers have begun training for deployment in support of peacekeeping operations in Kosovo (KFOR11). The Mobilization is expected to begin December 2008. It is the largest formation of elements under one command that has been deployed by the California Army National Guard in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

The 40th Infantry Division, based in Los Alamitos, and subordinate elements from across the nation will lead and man Multi-National Task Force East (MMTF-E), part of the NATO led Kosovo Force (KFOR). Brig. Gen. Keith Jones, 40th ID deputy commanding general, will command MNTF-E for the KFOR 11 rotation.

"Our mission will be to conduct peace enforcement operations in the Southeast sector of Kosovo. Our

purpose is to provide a safe and secure environment for all the people in our sector of the newly independent Kosovo," Jones said.

National Guard Units from Alaska, Maryland, West Virginia and the U.S. Army Reserve will also be part of MNTF-E KFOR 11 rotation.

Leadership from the 40th ID and subordinate elements have spent months preparing and planning for the Kosovo mission to ensure Soldiers are prepared to meet and exceed the mission requirements in Kosovo. Most recently, 40th ID Soldiers completed a Warfighter CPX at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., in early August.

Warrior training and pre-mobilization training for all Soldiers is set to begin in staggered Annual Training periods beginning in September. Units will receive training on different dates and will be notified of their unit's training dates by their chain of command.

In December, Soldiers will move to Camp Atterbury, Ind., for more in-depth mobilization training.

"Training for the mission will be intense, and will span the spectrum from Individual Army Warrior Task training and weapons qualification, to battalion and Task Force staff proficiency training and mobilization readiness exercises," Jones said.

Once mobilization training in Indiana is complete, Soldiers will move to the Joint Multi-National Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany, for final validation for mobilization. During training at JMRC Soldiers and leaders will be tested with realistic tactical situations similar to those that might arise in Kosovo. Finally, after final validation the Task Force will deploy to Kosovo.

The training will be familiar to many CNG Soldiers. The KFOR11 mission marks the second time in

four years that the 40th Infantry Division has commanded this particular task force. In 2005, the 40th ID. led a one-year rotation for U.S. Soldiers in the KFOR mission. U.S. military forces have been part of the NATO peacekeeping forces since 1999.

During the deployment California Army National Guard Soldiers will have many opportunities to train and interact with Soldiers from contributing nations including the lead nations of France, Italy, Ireland, and Turkey for the four other sectors and Soldiers from six other nations. Currently, NATO has more than 10,000 troops deployed in Kosovo to conduct peace-enforcement operations to ensure the security and stability of Kosovo.

Soldiers who are interested in joining the KFOR11 Mission should contact their chain of command to join this opportunity to participate in an important multi-national peacekeeping mission.

## SUSTAINABILITY

BY MICHAEL HOLDER

In our continuing series of articles on sustainability and working toward a better environment for the present and future, the California National Guard (CANG) is highlighting the efforts of the California Air National Guard's (CAANG) 144th Fighter Wing, in Fresno. Addressing two of the sustainability goals directed by Executive Order (EO) 13423, the 144th FW constructed a series of photovoltaic generation units/arrays. In doing so, they not only provided a renewable energy source, but also created energy efficiency and the reduction of greenhouse gases into the environment.

The 144th FW has long been concerned with both conserving energy and the impact of energy consumption on the environment. To implement the use of renewable energy the 144th FW took advantage of their location in Fresno where the dry sunny climate lends itself to harnessing solar energy.

Normally PVAs require a large amount of dedicated acreage to collect enough solar energy to generate sufficient electricity. Like many of the CANG facilities around the state, the 144th FW could not afford the loss of acreage of a standard PVA without adversely affecting their mission. Instead, the 144th FW decided to install PVAs on existing building rooftops and to engi-

neer carports that integrate additional PVAs. This decision allowed the 144th FW to take advantage of the sunny climate without impairing their mission capabilities.

The 144th FW programmed funding for a three-phase project to install enough PVAs to meet its baseline energy demands. The first phase consisted of both roof-mounted and carport-mounted panels to provide 300 kilowatt of generation. The second phase consisted of 180 KW of carport-mounted generation capacity. The total project, when complete, will produce approximately 660 KW of generation capacity.

In a one-year period, the first phase PVAs generated over 400 megawatt hours of renewable power, which equates to annual savings of approximately \$60,000 and avoidance of 836,249 pounds of greenhouse gases being emitted into the environment.

The avoidance of greenhouse gases of just 200 pounds is the equivalent of taking 7 cars off the street each day, meaning that the Phase 1 generation alone has been the equivalent of taking over 29,000 cars off the street each day.

The second phase of the system came online in March 2008 and is expected to increase energy savings to approximately \$96,000 per year.

The final phase, when completed, will increase the savings to approximately \$132,000 per year. The avoidance of greenhouse gases will also increase by about 60 percent with each completed phase.

Solar power is a 100 percent renewable resource and the reduction in the 144th FW's consumption from the commercial grid reduces its reliance during times of critical power shortages. This enables the 144th FW to sustain mission activities during

periods of peak electricity demand when it would otherwise be required to curtail them.

The 144th FW PVA project meets the "Triple Bottom Line" of sustainability: mission, environment, and community. As the electrical output supports the mission, solar power is good for the environment and the community benefits by shaded parking areas, reduced emissions and reduced energy requirements for energy suppliers.



Photovoltaic generation units rest atop buildings at the 144th Fighter wing, in Fresno, part of the wing's efforts to increase energy efficiency and decrease environmental impact.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE



# '08 CELEBRATION

OF THE ENLISTED &  
NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS CORPS



Photo by PO1 Bart A. Bauer | Courtesy of U.S. Army



Photo by Patrick Buffett | Courtesy of U.S. Army



Photo by Tim Hipps | Courtesy of U.S. Army

## SOLDIER & NCO OF THE YEAR

BANQUET & AWARDS CEREMONY

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*Military: Mess Dress/ Dress Blues or Dress Greens • Civilian: Black Tie*

*\$55 per person by or before 24 September 2008*

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT SGT. 1ST CLASS DAVID COSS

*HHC, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade | (559) 347-5743 | david.coss@us.army.mil*







◆ Task Force Bucket is comprised of 200 Airmen from Air National Guard units throughout the state.



▲ **Cover Shot** Sergeant Alejandro Sapiens, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Aviation Brigade, rushes between buildings during urban terrain training.



▲ California National Guardsmen conduct coldline firefighter training operations as part of Task Force Pick in Hayfork, Calif.



▲ Sergeant First Class Jessica Velasco briefs Command Sgt. Maj. William Clark, Command Sgt. Maj. Jose Gomez and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Winstead on the California National Guard's operations at the Lime Complex in Hayfork, Calif., as part of Task Force Pick.



▲ California National Guard Soldiers pull long lengths of fire hose across the rugged mountains to get water to "hot spots" still remaining in burned areas. Soldiers are working long days in support of the US Forest Service. Operation Lightning Strike team members of Task Force Pick are working at the Lime Complex, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, Hayfork, Calif.



CONTRIBUTORS | STAFF SGT. BERGQUIST CSMR | STAFF SGT. CHARLES VAUGHN | TECH SGT. ROBIN MEREDITH | TECH SGT. JULIE AVEY | MASTER SGT. RICHARD E. PACK

# AT A GLANCE



▲ Sergeant Linebarger slides downhill to move to a more stable area while cold training as part of Task Force Pick in Hayfork, Calif.



▲ California National Guard Soldiers perform stretches to avoid injury while working long days in support of the US Forest Service. Operation Lightning Strike team members are working at the Lime Complex, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, in Hayfork, Calif.



▲ California National Guard Soldiers of Bravo Company, 4th Platoon, show their high spirits at the close of a long work day as members of Task Force Pick. The Soldiers are from the Southern California Area and drill at the Los Alamitos Joint Forces Training Base.



▲ Members of Task Force Bucket's A5 Flight receive their initial gear issue July 23, 2008.





# OCS GRADUATES BRING EXPERIENCE

BY 2ND LT. WILL MARTIN

PHOTOS BY SGT. 1ST CLASS STEVEN PAYER



Frank Aceves' desire to become an officer was kindled two years ago on the battlefields of Iraq. There, as a squad leader in Baghdad, he crossed paths with an Arkansas Army National Guard lieutenant who, for Aceves, personified leadership.

"He carried himself well and would never sweat the small stuff," said Aceves, who took particular notice of the officer's fairness and interest in each of his troops. "All the troops respected him. He didn't see a unit, he saw a Soldier."

Soon after, Aceves decided he would one day wear the golden bar of a second lieutenant and provide a similar example to those under his command. On August 16, 2008, that goal became reality as he and 21 other California Guardsmen graduated from the Army Officer Candidate School in a ceremony at Camp San Luis Obispo.

In reaching their goal, the candidates took two divergent paths that while different in length - the one 18 months, the other an "accelerated" 8-week course - were similar in the depths of their difficulty.

En route to graduation, each candidate was required to master day and night land-navigation courses, complete three timed road marches, pass college-level military coursework and successfully lead several squad and platoon field missions amid "hostile" conditions. Tack on combat water-survival tests, combatives, peer evaluations, drill and ceremony, an intense training environment (described by one recent graduate as "basic training on steroids") and regular morale-boosting low crawls, and graduation day emerged as not only a welcome milestone, but one that was also well earned.

Present at the ceremony were Maj. Gen. William H. Wade, adjutant general of the California National Guard, Brig. Gen. Louis J. Antonetti, commander for the California National Guard, and Marine Corps Col. Royal P. Mortenson, who served as keynote speaker for the ceremony.

"A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself," said Mortenson, quoting British philosopher John Stuart Mill in an effort to commend the graduates on the nobility of their calling.

The graduates, however, needed little reminding of the seriousness of the military climate that awaits them. As the nation's most frequently mobilized National Guard force, California bears much of the responsibility for the Global War on Terrorism. This new class of officers, many of them platoon leaders who could soon see combat time, will bear much of that weight.

"I realize that I will probably be deployed, and now it's about much more than just me, it's literally the lives of the troops that are in my hands," said 2nd Lt. Marco Abrego, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran set to serve as a 270th Military Police Company platoon leader in Sacramento. "If I mess something up, someone might die. That's something I don't take lightly."

To face such challenges, the graduates said they will draw on something many of their West Point and ROTC counterparts lack: enlisted experience. All but a few of the graduates entered OCS as NCOs, many with wartime deployments and combat experience. Such personal histories provide the candidates with a confidence evident when they ponder their military futures.

"I embrace the challenge of being able to lead troops, even into combat," said 2nd Lt. Karla Dembik, a former Marine and new military intelligence officer with the 40th Infantry Division HHC in Los Alamitos. "The idea of going into war isn't something I'm so much scared of, but it puts me on high alert when thinking about how I'll take care of my soldiers. They're like my family, and you put your family first, and yourself last."





# NCE, FACE HIGH EXPECTATIONS



Marco A. Abrego



Frank C. Aceves



Robert L. Aguirre



William L. Anderson



Sean I. Brevig



Karla C. Dembik



Marcel Dera



Josiah A. Faber



Darnell C. Horner



William J. Hull



William L. Martin



Jesse D. Nicholaw



Kirkwood S. Platt, Jr.



Deborah K. Sherrick



Gregory D. Sloan



Alejandro Strawn



Brian K. Terry



Thomas C. Touw



Martin Velasco



Guy O. Wangenstein



Deborah A. Wiggins



Anita E. Younger

## The General Albert L. Lemen Annual Award

2nd Lt. William Hull

## The Association of the United States Army Leadership Award

2nd Lt. Deborah Sherrick

## The Erickson Trophy

2nd Lt. William Anderson

## The National Guard Association of California Award

2nd Lt. Sean Brevig



# SERGEANTS MAJOR ASSOCIATION HOSTS MOTORCYCLE FUNDRAISER

BY SPC. EDDIE SIGUENZA

PHOTO BY JOYCE PROVENCE



Members of the Sergeants Major Association pose with a Veterans Freedom Quilt. The quilt, donated by the Sacramento Elks Lodge No.6, has been signed by survivors of Pearl Harbor, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Global War on Terrorism.

Rather than take off a sunny, Saturday in June, Sgt. Maj. Lenny "Mac" McAdams decided to get his hands dirty.

He mounted his classic Indian motorcycle, gathered other California National Guard senior non-commissioned officers and organized

a charitable event: the inaugural Hometown Hero's Charity Motorcycle Run in Placerville.

Close to 150 motorcycle fanatics and dozens of organizations played host to Guard families, friends and visitors to benefit the Sergeants Major Association of California Chaplain's Fund. Proceeds help Soldiers, Airmen and their families through trying times, McAdams explained.

"The association started the Chaplain's Fund in 1994 to help California Guardsmen with financial aid," he said. "It's something Soldiers and Airmen can use in case something happens."

This was a first-ever event, although it materialized from another function hosted by sergeants major in Southern California, McAdams said, who wanted a broader charity to accommodate today's cost of living.

"A thousand dollars today isn't even enough to pay rent," he said.

Participating vendors and family-related organizations set up booths and displays. A live band provided entertainment. Food was provided as well. McAdams raffled off prizes, with the top winner earning a free vehicle sun roof installation.

Upon request, McAdams intends on moving next year's event to Sacramento, to a bigger facility and more marketable region. He's putting effort into the Chaplain's Fund to make it more prominent for Guardsmen.

"This is a start. This is the crawl phase," McAdams said. "You just got to get your hands dirty. You got to get involved. We'll do a lot more next year now that we've seen what could be done."

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the Chaplain's Fund has provided more than \$220,000 in financial assistance for more than 250 California Guardsmen and their families.

## CASTING CALL

# 233<sup>RD</sup> PUTS ACTION IN ROCK VIDEO

BY STAFF SGT. RYAN J. ESPARZA

Change of plans Staff Sgt. Esparza! Instead of two weeks of annual training at Camp Roberts, the 233rd Firefighters will be participating in the filming of a Kid Rock music video in Santa Clarita, Calif. I can't say I was disappointed to hear that our stay at majestic Camp Roberts was to be cut short, but acting is not really my forte.

The 233rd has never backed down from a mission, so when this one came up, we hit the ground running. We needed to get the Tactical Firefighting Truck (TFFT), a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (Humvee), an ambulance, and seven soldiers down to Southern California no later than June 9, 2008. Simple enough request, except the TFFT was at the shop with two flat tires and AT was quickly approaching. Luckily, with the help of our maintenance shop, we were able to get two very large tires replaced and reinstall the engine. Now, all we had to worry about was getting the TFFT and ambulance down to Los Angeles in time for filming. Upon contacting the United States

Property and Fiscal Office, we submitted a request and Teresi Trucking Inc. picked up the equipment for transport. We jumped on a plane and a short flight later the 233rd and our equipment were on ground at the Blue Cloud Ranch where films such as "Iron Man" and "The Three Amigos" were filmed. The set was alive with activity as actors dressed in robes milled about checking their hair and makeup, and set designers made adjustments to the Middle-Eastern looking streets. It was two days of filming in the desert before we moved on to ABC Studios. Around the corner from the building where Seinfeld was filmed was a set that looked like Anytown, USA. There we marched in a formation up and down the street as bystanders cheered us on. On the final day of the shoot we filmed an evacuation scene where a wildland fire was backing down a hillside in a residential neighborhood. It was the National Guard's job to work with the Fire Department and other municipalities to evacuate the citizens of the area. Finally, a situation we felt at least



Kid Rock poses with Sgt. Kristine Kirkwood and Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Kirkwood.

a little familiar with. At about 2 a.m., we completed filming and loaded up to go home, good thing too, because the CBL was due to pick up the equipment at 6 a.m.

and our flight out of LAX was at noon Back home we stored the equipment and it's back to work as usual, not sure what's next. Maybe a real fire?

PHOTO BY COL. TERRY KNIGHT





163d Civil Engineering Squadron members Master Sgts. Stacy Burnside and Moses Alvarado and Tech Sgt. Karl Childress discuss their plan of action before laying out more construction.



Crew members from the 175th Wing in Maryland and the 163d Reconnaissance Wing in California refurbish the inside of a school in Vlasenica, Bosnia.



Master Sergeant Clyde Wood and Staff Sgt. John Miller from the 175th Wing work alongside Master Sgt. Ordel Granada from the 163d Wing to mount a patch panel to provide Internet to the school.

## CAL GUARDSMEN HELP BUILD SCHOOL, BONDS IN BOSNIA

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TECH SGT. JOSEPH PROUSE

The National Guard deployed two units to Bosnia in July to restore a school and a national monument as part of the National Guard's Partnership for Peace program.

Joining the mission were more than 70 individuals from Maryland's 175th Wing and California's 163d Reconnaissance Wing. The team was comprised of members from the wings' civil engineer and security forces squadrons and communications flights.

The two states' Guardsmen worked alongside Bosnian and Serbian nationals in helping to form connections between the nation's two cultures through communication and hard work. In the end, the mission provided Bosnians a lasting appreciation for the United States and its military.

Central to the mission was the refurbishing of the Vuk Karadzic elementary school in the town of Vlasenica, two hours east of Sarajevo. The reconstruction process began July 2007 when the 175th started façade improvements. The two units later returned to combine manpower and equipment to finish the job.

The reconstruction efforts focused on replacing the ceiling with

drop-down tiles, electrical wiring, lighting, telephone lines, internet access and a fire-alarm system.

"This is like winning the lottery," said Danijela Djerić, a teacher at the school for more than nine years. "We are very thankful, and for the first time, the children are excited to return to school. It makes me feel good to help out."

The impact on the children did not go unnoticed by National Guard team members, either.

"While we're working we see the kids watching us," said 163d Civil Engineer Squadron member Master Sgt. Andy Remis. "I can only imagine when they see the school all finished; it's going to be something they remember for the rest of their lives."

The second portion of the project involved restoring a national monument. The crewmembers at Mount Igman worked diligently to clean up and improve access to the site.

The monument was erected in honor of four NATO members who died when their armored vehicle veered off the road and plummeted down the mountainside. Commemorating their

death, headstones were placed next to the area where the vehicle crashed.

"This is an amazing and historical site," said 163d CES member Master Sgt. Earl Rankin. "It is dedicated to a few Americans who died trying to aid Bosnia during the war, and to come over here and work alongside their military members, to honor both their country and ours, is an amazing experience."

Vlasenica's mayor, Dragomir Stupar, was one of the first students to attend the Vuk Karadzic elementary school when it first opened. In assessing the work, he was noticeably moved in seeing the classrooms and hallways where he began his education being transformed to look better than when the school was first constructed. Stupar went on to say he could not thank the members of the U.S. military enough for all their labor in his community.



The outside of the school in Vlasenica, Bosnia, where members of the 175th Wing and 163d Wings refurbished the inside.



# GUARD LEADERS, CANADIAN REPS SHARE FIREFIGHTING WISDOM

BY SPC. EDDIE SIGUENZA AND SPC. JOSEPH WOOLLS

California National Guard leaders and a Canadian delegation held a meeting of minds recently in response to the Guard's call-up for Operation Lightning Strike.

About a dozen Canadian emergency management service representatives were briefed July 14 on the Guard's mission to support CAL FIRE with ongoing wildfires throughout the state. The briefing is part of a weeklong California tour hosted by the Governor's Office of Homeland Security for the British Columbia, Canada, public safety delegation.

"California and Canada, we share a lot of the same risks such as earthquakes, fires and flooding. Those risks don't know the border," said Alain Dudoit, Consul General of Canada, Los Angeles. "This is another way we can strengthen our borders by sharing knowledge of our emergency situations. Our economic lifelines depend on our cooperation across the border."

Brig. Gen. Kevin Ellsworth, the Guard's Joint Forces staff director, commanded the briefing that covered key aspects of the Guard's role. The visiting officials reviewed fire locations and the Guard's operations areas, and other concerns of how the Guard responded after Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger called up the California National Guard on June 22.

"We talked about the complexities of bringing civilian and military assets together to respond to emergencies in both countries. It's a very complicated process and [we're] learning from our Canadian partners and their systems as well as sharing our processes and procedures here in California with them as we expand our international cooperation and partnerships," Brig. Gen. Ellsworth explained. "It's all about relationships. If we can develop a fundamental understanding of the strengths of both countries then

it's going to make the response performance when the time comes much more rapid and much more helpful."

The delegation included Canadian military, civilian police and emergency officials who also briefly toured JFHQ's operations center. They were impressed with the Guard's communication technology that can "see" firefighting operations in most of the toughest burning terrains.

"We're happy just to see the operations core with all that technology," said David Morhart, deputy solicitor general, British Columbia Ministry of Public Safety. "Technology like that is really a great tool. Soldiers can do their jobs better."

Dudoit explained that Canada and California shared strong relations in 2005 during Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. Canada sent a military unit to support recovery



efforts and worked with California Guardsmen occasionally.

"We want to be a part of the training and protection provided by the California military to prevent anything from happening. That's the purpose of this visit," he said. "There are a number of opportunities between California and Canada. We're partners in a lot of things."

Canadian forestry volunteers currently assist the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) on ground, serving as team leaders and firefighters as well.

## NATIONAL GUARD CRASH CREW PROVIDES ADDED SAFETY MEASURE TO FIREFIGHTING EFFORT

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. AL BOSCO

Some, having a boring job is not the way to live, but the members of the California National Guard's 233rd Engineering Detachment firefighters wouldn't have it any other way.

While many California Guardsmen assigned to Joint Task Force 115 are instructed to provide direct support on firelines throughout the state, Soldiers assigned to the task force's 233rd ED are staged at airports near the fire zones and tasked with providing emergency support to arriving aircrews.

"We're ready for any type of helicopter incident, as well as providing basic life support services should an injured person be brought in," said Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Esparza, 233rd ED team chief. "Fortunately, we haven't had to respond to an incident yet."

According to Sgt. Esparza, his team works from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day. They begin with a daily briefing, followed by performing vehicle checks, then they stage on the flightline and wait - prepared to jump to action at a moment's notice.

"Some people think it's boring, but in this line of work being bored is a good thing," said Army Sgt. Sergio Duarte, a member of the team.

Esparza and his six-person crew redeployed to the Monterey County's East Basin from the West Basin, near Big Sur, where he said the fires in that zone had been contained. They operate the

Army's M1142 Tactical Fire Fighting Truck (TFFT), a firefighting monster capable of delivering 1,000 gallons of water and foam per minute via roof and bumper-mounted turrets. Additionally, the TFFT boasts myriad rescue tools and medical equipment allowing the crew to respond to nearly any emergency situation. In fact, as Esparza added, heads turn whenever his crash truck rolls in.

"Our civilian counterparts are awestruck when they see our big green fire truck," Esparza said.

According to Esparza, the 233rd ED is conducting the same mission supporting the fire efforts that they would in any other deployed environment, adding that being away from home is the hardest part of the mission overall.

"We're Soldiers," he remarked, "but we also have families and it's tough to be away from them."

But despite being separated from loved ones, Esparza said he's excited at the opportunity to assist with the mission any way he can and added his team has enjoyed a great partnership with federal, state and local agencies also supporting the effort.

Other members of his team echoed his sentiments.

"It's a good feeling to be able to support the fires," said Duarte. "For me getting the experience is my favorite part."



Army Sgt. Sergio Duarte, a 233rd Engineering Detachment firefighter assigned to Joint Task Force 115, arranges equipment in a M-1142 Tactical Fire Fighting Truck (TFFT). Duarte provides emergency response in the event an aircraft arrives requiring emergency assistance. Duarte redeployed to King City, Calif., July 12 from the Big Sur area where the fire burning had been contained.



# ‘WAIT AND SEE’

## JTF SENTINEL MISSION RESTS ITS WINGS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. AL BOSCO

Since the California fires began June 21, Army and Air National Guard aircrews have flown continuously, supporting the massive firefighting operation.

At the height of the operation, more than two dozen aircraft from as many as 14 states, and as far away as New York, were assigned to Joint Task Force Sentinel. Aircrews endured the stifling heat and smoke, flying continuous fire suppression missions and dropping nearly four million gallons of water on the flames that have scorched more than 900,000 acres, or an area roughly equivalent to the size of Rhode Island.

In fact, just one week ago, the flightline at Mather Field, near Sacramento, sat mostly empty with the exception of aircraft requiring maintenance and a couple of spare aircraft ready to go if called upon.

Now, with the fires mostly under control, the aircrews supporting the effort can finally begin to breathe as many aircraft are pulled from active support to a stand-by role.

According to Maj. David Hall, a JTF Sentinel operations officer, operations from Mather are being scaled back based on direction from the state's Joint Forces Headquarters and as a result of inputs from the Office of Emergency Services, CAL FIRE and other civil agencies indicating forces on the ground, along with civil aircraft support, are sufficient to handle the current fire situation. "This is a balancing act, and we work with multiple agencies to

determine what type of support they need from us," Hall said. "Downsizing typically occurs when our partner agencies believe they can manage the fires still burning with the civilian air and ground assets they have available."

The major added that although Guard aircrews aren't likely going to see the same level of tasking, they will maintain a presence, along with ensuring aircraft are immediately available to support state missions as required.

"We have six aircraft still supporting active missions, but we'll have about four additional aircraft available that will serve as alert aircraft able to launch if needed," Hall said.

Interestingly, most of the aircraft currently on mission aren't California assets. In fact, Hall said many of the out-of-state aircrews are taking the lead role in the effort affording the California crews a much-needed break.

"The out-of-state units showed up and were eager to help out with the mission, so we're sending them out," Hall said. "This is a great opportunity for us and them, since they are getting some hands-on experience fighting the fires, helping out California and also giving our aircrews a chance to breathe."

In fact, Staff Sgt. Jim Irby, an Alabama National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk crewchief, said he's anxious to get their aircraft on the fires.



(From left) Specialist John Schultz, Staff Sgts. Robert Hamilton and Jim Irby and Sgt. Michael Parquette, Alabama National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk crew chiefs, play a game of cards while waiting for a mission July 19 at Mather Field, Calif.

"We got here July 16 and completed our training, so now we're ready to get out there and help," Irby said. "We almost got to launch twice yesterday, but firefighters in the area were able to gain control of the situation quickly."

And almost on cue, the unit got a mission July 18 – to swap out with the Kansas National Guard aircrews supporting the Chico Complex fires, making pilot Chief Warrant Officer Randy Kirkland smile.

"This is what we came here for," he said, as he and his crew prepared to head for their aircraft.

According to CAL FIRE Wildland Battalion Chief Scott Watson, the Guard's quick response, coupled with excellent communication among the agencies, was a critical factor in the civil authorities' ability to gain control of the fire so quickly.

"It's been remarkable to take so many aircraft from different states, bring them to California and train and utilize them," Watson said. "This is a first – a historic event, and we've built a template showing that allegiances like this are critical. I think from this we can actually work toward a national standard for emergency response."



A Kansas National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk crew returns to Mather Field, near Sacramento, Calif., after returning from firefighting missions July 19. Kansas is one of 14 states that sent aircrew and aircraft to California to support the fire suppression effort.



Task Force Pick members gather for their final formation in Mayfork, Calif.

PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. RICHARD BERNQUIST



# CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD'S TASK FORCE PICK A JOB WELL DONE!

BY LT. COL. LLOYD J. GOODROW

The 240 members of the California National Guard's TF Pick stood silently in formation reflecting on the previous 21 day experience serving the state of California as firefighters tackling the raging forest fires in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Each member received the California State Activation Medal and others received the California Enlisted Excellence Ribbon, California Commendation Medal, one U.S. Army Achievement Medal, one Army Commendation Medal and one California Medal of Merit.

Task Force Pick was honored by the presence of the entire Southwest Regional Level 1 Incident Command Team and the U.S. Forest Service leadership, as well as elected officials of the Hayfork, Calif., area.

The Level 1 Incident Commander, Dugger Hughes, praised Task Force Pick for their outstanding service to the Nation and the State of California. He noted the sacrifices made deploying as well as the sacrifice of leaving their families.

"You have once again put your lives on hold for the people of Cal-

ifornia," said Hughes. "You have left your families and your jobs behind for this very important task. I offer my deepest thanks on behalf of the entire team here in Hayfork, and I bid you farewell until we meet again. Well done, Task Force Pick!"

Firefighting is a very dangerous occupation, but for some members of Task Force Pick, the previous 21 days was an adventure.

"The entire activation was very fast...from the time of call up and the short but extremely concentrated training...to the actual boots on the ground fighting fires...it took only a few days," said Sgt. Joseph Galvan, of Modesto, Calif. "Our morale was very high from the very start straight through to the very end of the mission. I take my hat off to my fellow members of the team we proudly Task Force Pick."

The large majority of the members of Task Force Pick come from the Los Angeles area of southern California. Many of these members have never traveled to the wilderness areas of Northern California, not to mention none of them having worked as firefighters in the

intense forest fires that are ravaging wooded areas.

Injuries to Task Force Pick were minor, with most injuries related to blisters, bruising and assorted respiratory ailments associated with long-term exposure to smoke. One very lucky Soldier received a rattlesnake bite that fortunately got caught up in his pant leg and, although his skin was broken by the bite, he received no venom. With two Forest Service Fire Fighters killed while fighting these wildfires, watching out for fellow Soldiers and individual safety was in the forefront of every Soldiers mind.

The Operations Tempo for Task Force Pike was high. Summarizing their 21-day experience, Alpha and Bravo companies walked 250 miles and mopped up 69 miles of the fireline located at the Telephone, Lime and Slide fires of the Lime Complex Fire. Over 165 huge trees were cut down in order to encircle the fire. During gridding operations, 573 hot spots were found and extinguished by 9 hand crews/platoons. On the fireline, 630 gallons of water were consumed for hydration. Alpha and Bravo companies were each

transported more than 850 miles via school bus on the mountainous windy roads and the steep elevations of the Trinity Mountain Alps.

"We had very little personal time, but the mission was so important," said Sgt. Dennis Jones, of San Diego. "Most of my experience was taken up by long bus rides, hiking the steep terrain and checking and clearing hot spots. It was hard work, and it was dangerous work. I'd get back to my tent after a 10-hour day and tend to my feet before getting a shower and going to chow. After chow it was time to make a few phone calls and hit the tent before starting all over again the next day. It was very hard work, but the reward came in the smiles from the folks from Hayfork and Weaverville who really appreciated us being here helping them out. Everyone was so nice to us."

With Task Force Pick's mission completed, they returned to their homes in the Los Angeles area and resumed their lives. Task Force Pick members can now proudly proclaim themselves as members of California's National Guard.....and Firefighters.



# FIRE MISSION CHALLENGES ARKANSAS AIRCREWS, REUNITES FELLOW WARRIORS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. AL BOSCO

With the majority of Northern California wildfires extinguished, aircrews from other states' National Guard units, like those of Arkansas' 77th Aviation Brigade, can bid farewell to the Golden State proud of their accomplishments.

Many aircrews, like those from Arkansas, spent upwards of two weeks supporting the California National Guard's effort assisting the California governor's Office of Emergency Services and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection while they struggled to gain control over fires that have charred nearly one million acres since June 21.

While assigned under the California Guard's Joint Task Force Sentinel, aircrews from out of state, flying UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters, proved to be vital assets, dropping more than 4 million gallons of water on the fires and transporting more than 1,000 personnel to the blazes' front lines.

According to many aircrew members, the fires in California were vastly different than anything they expected or had dealt with before. In fact, according to Chief Warrant Officer Jeff Apke, an Arkansas Black Hawk pilot who arrived July 14 and spent time on the Butte and Shasta Lightning Complexes, sometimes the mission was unsettling.

"The intensity of the fires was amazing," he said. "It was a little unnerving to watch trees crown and explode as we flew near them."

Apke added although he has had to support firefighting efforts at home, it was nothing like his time in California.

"Nothing we've done at home has been this challenging," he said. "We've had to deal with the high altitudes and difficult terrain, something we don't have at home. At home the maximum altitude is 2,500 feet, but here we were operating about 7,500 feet which presents operational challenges for our aircraft."

But not all of the aircrews sent from Arkansas were able to support the effort. In fact, as an aircrew arrived to swap out Apke and his crew, firefighters gained the upper hand and were able to manage what was left of the fires.

"I was excited to be able to come and help out, even though we didn't actually get to get on mission," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joel Newburn, another Arkansas Black Hawk pilot. "I was actually looking forward to seeing what our other crews have been going through over the past two weeks."

Aside from being able to support the massive effort, the deployment did have a couple of special



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Jeff Apke, left, a UH-60 Blackhawk pilot, conducts a pre-flight briefing with Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joel Newburn, also a Black Hawk pilot, before departing the Mather Flight Facility in northern California July 29 for home. Apke and his fellow crewmembers supported California's firefighting operations since July 14, dropping more than 30,000 gallons of water on the fires.

moments for Apke, one of which occurred July 18, when he was promoted to his current rank by California's State Aviation Officer and Joint Task Force Sentinel commander, Col. Mitch Medigovich.

"Typically, you get promoted in your own state, but for whatever reason my orders showed up here and the colonel was kind enough to promote me. It was nice," Apke said.

Additionally, Apke and his fellow crew members met up with some fellow flyers from the Alabama National Guard, also supporting

the California effort, with whom he was recently deployed while supporting operations in Southwest Asia.

Having flown more than 19 missions, and conducting more than 46 water drops on the fires totaling about 30,000 gallons of water, Apke said he was glad to be able to help and was ready to come to California's aid anytime he's needed.

"It felt really good to come out [to California] and do whatever we could to help," he said. "After two weeks, we're ready to head home, but anytime California needs our help all they have to do is call."

## CALIFORNIA GUARD RESCUES NATION'S LARGEST PONDEROSA PINE

BY LT. COL. LLOYD J. GOODROW

California National Guard's Task Force Pick came to the rescue when the wild fires in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest threatened nation's tallest Ponderosa pine tree.

Ponderosa pines are plentiful in the forests of the western United States. They are among the most widely distributed pines in North America. They also have an average height of 180 feet and they can live for 300 to 600 years.

When the team of about 20 Guard firefighters reached the pine's location, a few miles north of the Forest Glen campsite, they knew that this tree was something special.

Standing at 240.5 feet high (almost 24 stories) with a trunk nearly eight feet thick and estimated at an age of 700 years, this tree had to be saved.

The significance of the tree was verified by the US Forest Service team member as being documented by the American Forests' National Register of Big Trees.

"It was a lot of hard work and heart that went into keeping this incredible tree safe," said Spc. Diana Diaz. "This majestic tree has witnessed a lot of history and stands as a symbol for survival. There have been wildfires through these forests before ... and this tree still stands.

We're working hard to make sure that she makes it through this fire too."

That task wasn't easy. With low hanging branches, the tree was immediately threatened by sparks and embers from nearby fires that could easily ignite the tree if the wind shifted just right.

The team of Guardsmen spent hours trimming the low hanging threats and also cleared a wide area around the tree that would eliminate any fuel source on the ground.

Two Guard members spent the entire day cutting down neigh-

boring trees, and the rest of team stacked piles of wood that would burn a safe distance from the tree. They also set up a water sprinkler system that will keep the cleared area moist.

"Rescuing a tree that some might consider a national treasure has been one of the most unusual missions I've ever been on," said Spc. David Walker. "Being here in the Shasta-Trinity Forest with the other members of my unit has been a rough but rewarding mission. I'm proud to be here and I'm very proud of my fellow soldiers who are serving here with me."



# HAVING THE COURAGE TO SEEK HELP

## SUICIDE PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

BY MAJ. ERIC FRYE

This month's article is near and dear to me and is titled with a quote from Command Sgt. Maj. John Gipe, Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard. Suicide is a national concern, and its occurrence represents the 11th leading cause of death in America. Anyone who has ever experienced a suicide either in their family or among their friends knows how devastating this tragedy can be. With the advent of multiple deployments and the potential for combat related stressors, suicide in the Army is on the rise. September is National Suicide Prevention Month and the Grizzly is a great vehicle to get the message of prevention out to our troops.

### COMMANDERS – BE PASSIONATE ABOUT SUICIDE PREVENTION

Leaders must "own" this level of commitment when it comes to Suicide Prevention. Soldiers and their families look to our leadership for guidance but they also look at how they are treated when they are in crisis. I have outlined below the Army's approach to combating suicide in the ranks. As leaders, we must involve ourselves at every level in this process.

### SUICIDE PREVENTION – A THREE TIERED APPROACH.

**PREVENTION** is the first and perhaps the most critical step in reducing suicide. This process of prevention begins with education. Keeping Soldiers educated on the causes of combat stress, depression and other mental and emotional factors is a key component of any prevention program. As Soldiers, we are taught to manage our emotional pain and suppress our fears and complete the mission. During periods of extreme stress, managing these feelings can be difficult if not impossible. Knowing what to look for in terms of emotional changes is the key to suicide prevention. The California National Guard facilitates a Peer-to-Peer Training Program to educate Soldiers and commanders on the factors leading to suicidal behavior. Peer-to-Peer training teaches Soldiers and commanders to identify changes in the appearances and behaviors of their fellow Soldiers, and to offer assistance in times of crisis. This critical training can often be the difference in getting a buddy referred to the unit Chaplain or Combat Stress Control team and an untimely death by the Soldier's own hand.

**IDENTIFICATION and INTERVENTION** of potentially suicidal feelings and behaviors is the second component of an effective Suicide Prevention Program. Once educated on the causes of suicidal behavior, identifi-

cation of those behaviors in a timely manner is critical. The Peer-to-Peer Program's effectiveness is directly tied to the unit's ability to know and "read" each other. Unit cohesion is the byproduct of a unit that lives and fights together, and knows each other. That familiarity or bond that Soldiers have with each other is the very quality that Peer-to-Peer builds upon to make an effective Suicide Prevention Program.

Some of the most common changes/behaviors that may lead a fellow Soldier to believe someone is in crisis are:

- ♦General depression and withdrawal from the Soldier's usual behaviors
- ♦Changes in sleeping patterns or appetite
- ♦Giving away possessions
- ♦Expressing feelings of hopelessness and helplessness
- ♦Use of drugs and alcohol
- ♦Increasing levels of irritability and rage
- ♦Feelings of being trapped, like there's no way out
- ♦Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- ♦Saying or feeling there's no reason for living
- ♦Talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- ♦Trying to get pills, guns or other ways to harm oneself
- ♦Declining level of performance in their work.

**SECURE and TREAT** is the third component of an effective Suicide Prevention Program. Effectively identifying a potentially suicidal behavior starts the process of referral and treatment. Soldier care is everyone's responsibility and that includes individual responsibility for seeking and receiving proper mental health care. Any treatment received by a Soldier for mental health is no different than other medical treatment they may receive in their career. As with other medical conditions, Soldiers needing mental health care may receive temporary or permanent profiles based on the results of required mental health examinations and eventual treatment. Profiles generated as a result of a mental health condition are originated by the State Surgeon's Office at JFHQ. Soldiers receiving temporary profiles to receive mental health care may become temporarily "flagged" to allow them the necessary time to receive that needed care, uninterrupted. In the case of a temporary profile for mental health care, this restriction from certain duties may last for periods up to a year. The State Surgeon will review the Soldier's progress and care received and makes any recommendation to continue

the Soldier's profile, modify the duty restrictions, return the Soldier to duty status or recommend a medical board for conditions considered permanent or long term.

It is important for Soldiers and their families to know that seeking mental health care following traumatic events is a routine medical activity found in other professionals closely aligned with military service.

### SOLDIER AND FAMILY SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

#### WHEN YOU'RE MOBILIZED TO A THEATER OF OPERATIONS

When you're deployed several treatment options are available. For most units in the field, CSC (Combat Stress Control) units are a good place to start, however, they are often mobile teams that move throughout the region and will have to be located. A typical CSC team will have at a minimum one mental health specialist and a clinical social worker or psychologist. The unit chaplain is most often the one resource readily available in the field and he will most likely know the location of the combat support hospital or aid station.

For Soldiers deployed to a region with fixed facilities or a post, the troop medical clinic or medical treatment facility is the place to find help fast. Depending on the size, the installation and the population serviced, the typical mental health activity will have several mental health specialists and one or more mental health officers available to treat emergent cases. Emergency mental health services can also be accessed through the post provost marshal's office.

#### WHEN YOU'RE BACK HOME

Several local, state and federal agencies have resources available as well as private non-profit agencies.

For emergent care, contact 911 and ask for assistance. County mental health can be accessed through the 911 operator.

Military One Source maintains a 24-hour lifeline at 1-800-342-9647. They can provide short term individual and family counseling at no cost to the Soldier. The website is [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com).

On the federal side, the TRICARE system (TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corporation – TriWest) maintains a 24-HOUR, seven day a week Behavioral Crisis Line. They can be reached at 1-866-284-3743 or [www.triwest.com](http://www.triwest.com).

The Veteran's Administration and SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) maintain a 24-HOUR, seven-day-a week toll-free hotline number. They can be reached at 1-800-342-9647.

The Veteran's Administration maintains a series of counseling centers (called Vet Centers) for both brief and long term counseling for redeployed Soldiers and their families. The Vet Centers are designed for out-patient use only and do not have accommodations for inpatient or emergent services.

The VA hospitals and medical centers are staffed with a 24-hour Emergency Room as well as mental health staff. These larger facilities are equipped for inpatient mental health care, counseling, agency referral and medication management. Both the VA Medical Centers/Hospitals and the neighborhood VA Vet Centers can be accessed by calling 1-800-827-1000 or [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

The California Department of Mental Health has recently taken the lead in initiating, developing and implementing a state Office of Suicide Prevention. The governor signed the new office into law on June 30, 2008. With this new law, California will join other states and agencies in combating suicide with a series of state initiatives and resources to establish a list of best practices that are effective at reducing suicide. The California Office of Suicide Prevention can be accessed at [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org).

### SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING RESOURCES AND TOOLS

The California National Guard's Mental Health Office in Sacramento is the home of the Suicide Prevention Program Manager (SPPM). Questions regarding assistance, training, resources or to report an incident can be directed to [eric.j.frye@us.army.mil](mailto:eric.j.frye@us.army.mil), or by phone at (916) 854-3019 or DSN 470-3019.





# NEWS & BENEFITS

## Vacation Like the Rich and Famous

Members of the Armed Forces and their families can stay in any of five Armed Forces Recreation Center (AFRC) resorts around the world. AFRC resorts offer affordable Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) facilities and include (1) the Hale Koa Hotel in Honolulu (2) the Shades of Green Hotel at Disney World in Orlando, Fla., (3) the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch, Germany, (4) the Dragon Hill Lodge in Seoul, Korea, and (5) the Cape Henry Inn in Virginia. Reservations for AFRC resorts can be made online at the Armed Forces Recreation Center Resorts Web site at [www.armymwr.com/](http://www.armymwr.com/). Rates are based on pay grade and travel status. If your schedule is flexible, consider getting there via Space A Travel.

## Senate Approves COLA Increase

The U.S. Senate recently passed S. 2617, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2008, which will adjust veterans' compensation rates to keep pace with inflation, effective Dec. 1, 2008. According to recent data provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, this increase will go to 2.8 million veterans and over 300,000 surviving spouses receiving dependency and indemnity compensation. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives for their consideration. While this year's cost-of-living increase has yet to be determined, the Congressional Budget Office has projected a 2.8 percent increase.

## Children's Videos Gain Popularity

Two videos produced by Army Medical Command and the American Academy of Pediatrics to help children and adolescents cope during a parent's deployment are gaining popularity. "Military Youth Coping with Separation: When Family Members Deploy" addresses a variety of deployment-related concerns for teens. "Mr. Poe and Friends Discuss Reunion After Deployment" was made for elementary-school-age children. What's more, 100,000 more copies of each video will be distributed by Military One Source in the near future. For more information, visit the Military One Source Child's Stress and Grief Web page in the Booklets and Recordings section.

## 'Inspiration Room' Launched

The Military Health System (MHS) launched the Inspiration Room at the Military Health System (MHS) website, <http://www.health.mil/> a place for the public to learn about the rich history of military medicine. This channel allows users to share thoughts, videos, photos, poems and letters from the field, and more. The Inspiration Room features regularly updated content including videos and articles about military medical pioneers and female leaders in the MHS. Additional video content comes through a partnership with the Internet video site Hulu.com, which provides a link from the Inspiration Room to a special Hulu page dedicated to military medicine as portrayed in film and television. Visitors to the Inspiration Room are encouraged to share their stories by e-mailing them to [mhswebcontent@tma.osd.mil](mailto:mhswebcontent@tma.osd.mil).

## DoD Guard and Reserve Benefits Guide

The ninth edition of the Department of Defense Guard and Reserve Benefits Guide is now out and available by accessing the following link <http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/documents/Benefits%20Guide%202008%20FINAL.pdf>. In this guide you will find information on benefits and entitlements such as TRICARE, Exceptional Family Member Program, Child Care, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, as well as many others issues pertinent to Guard members.

## Did you know?

### Did you know acceptance of an upgrade to First Class seating might be authorized when traveling in uniform?

DoD employees traveling in uniform may accept upgrades offered by an airline as long as they are generally available to the public or all military members. The offer must be an UNSOLICITED ON THE SPOT offer. However, an upgrade may not be accepted if it is provided on the basis of the DOD employee's grade or position. The Army policy states that Soldiers who are offered on-the-spot upgrades, without additional cost to the government over coach fares, may accept the upgrade and travel while in uniform, provided that the offer has been made by the airline without initiation by the Soldier. Additionally, Soldiers traveling in uniform are not allowed to pay for upgrades using person frequent flyer miles. These rules only apply when traveling in uniform.

See the following references for more information:

DoD Directive 5500.7 Joint Ethics Regulation (JER) Army Directive 2007-01 "Secretary of the Army Policy for Travel by Department of the Army Officials"

## CNG Remote Network Access

The J6 has implemented two new methods for accessing the California National Guard (CNG) network from remote sites, such as from your home, a civilian employer's office, or a hotel. Both solutions require that you have a CAC, Smart Card Reader (CAC Reader), and ActivClient software installed on your PC or laptop computer. If you can already login to AKO or Outlook Web Access using your CAC, you are ready for two new options: Citrix and E-VPN. Please see that attached file to determine the best option for you.

In order to gain remote access to the CNG network, you must first complete a Network Access Request form. For those users that already have VPN access to the CNG network, you are automatically approved for Citrix and E-VPN. The form and instructions for remote access are available from the following two locations:

- 1) J6 Portal Page (<https://portal.ca.ngb.army.mil/sites/cajs-im>). Look at the menu on the left side and expand "Home Networking", or
- 2) Log on to AKO, then click on the following link: [https://www.us.army.mil/suite/collaboration/folder\\_V.do?foid=12037069](https://www.us.army.mil/suite/collaboration/folder_V.do?foid=12037069).

Should you have any questions, please contact the J6 Helpdesk at 63498 or 1-866-CNG-DOIM (1-866-264-3646).

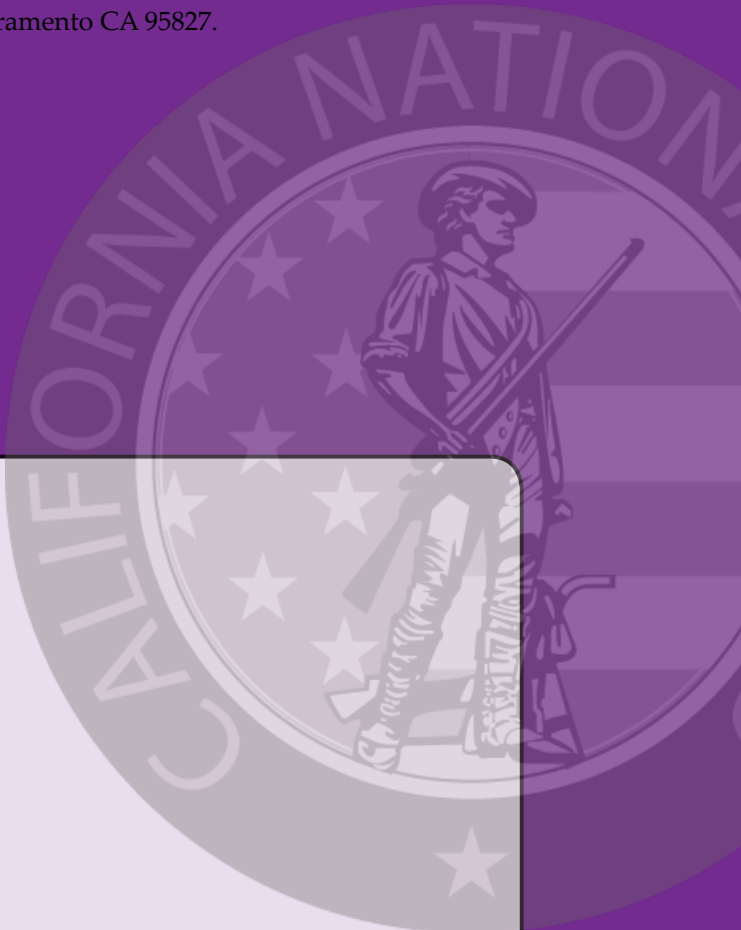




Task Force Pick's Bravo Company secures the fireline in Hayfork, Calif.  
**Photo by Staff Sgt. CA Richard S. Bergquist**

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